

News Release

Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 7, 2006

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PUBLIC COMMENTS SOUGHT ON FUTURE PLANS FOR GREAT DISMAL SWAMP NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Suffolk, Virginia- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is very pleased to announce the release of the draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP)/Environmental Assessment(EA) for the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, and its satellite refuge, the Nansemond National Wildlife Refuge. In response to comments and concerns provided by the public during earlier meetings for the CCP, the plan emphasizes major improvements to public use facilities and activities in both Suffolk and Chesapeake, Virginia, including a bear hunt, a variety of habitat restoration projects, improvements to hydrologic management, and continued preservation and maintenance of this unique natural ecosystem.

Public involvement will be very important to help complete a successful plan and address issues of concern. The draft document will be available March 13, 2006, on the web at <http://library.fws.gov/ccps.htm> and on the refuge website at www.fws.gov/northeast/greatdismalswamp. Copies of the draft will also be available for review at public libraries in communities surrounding the refuge. In addition, the complete draft document and *Highlights* summary report are available by request on CD-ROM from the Refuge.

Written comments on the draft CCP/EA will be accepted until close of business on April 14, 2006. Please submit by regular mail to Deloras Freeman, Great Dismal Swamp NWR, 3100 Desert Road, Suffolk, VA, 23434. Comments may also be made by electronic mail, addressed to www.fws.gov/northeast/greatdismalswamp. The comment must be inserted as plain text in the body of the message, otherwise it may be lost.

The public is invited to attend open house meetings where refuge management and planning staff will be available to receive comments and answer questions on proposed actions contained in the draft report. Meetings are scheduled from **4 pm to 7 pm** for the following dates and locations:

- Tuesday, March 21, 2006 Suffolk Conference Center, Hilton Garden Inn
The Kilby Room, 100 East Constance Road, Suffolk, VA 23434
- Thursday, March 23, 2006 County Extension Service Building
112 Court Street, Gatesville, NC, 27938
- Thursday, March 30, 2006 Major Hillard Library
824 Old George Washington Hwy, Chesapeake, VA 23323

